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# LOGBOOK

Virginia Department of Fire Programs Newsletter

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## Inside This Issue:

Message From VDFP  
Executive Director

2006 LE School for  
Fire Marshals

Burn Buildings  
dedicated

Propane Association  
donates burn  
simulators to VDFP

Foam Trailers to be  
available soon

10,080 smoke alarms  
distributed statewide

Public Education Tip

Safety/Training Tip

Christmas Tree Fire  
Facts

Structural Collapse  
training

Calendar of Events

## From the Executive Director

Greetings from the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP). As we approach the Holiday Season, it is imperative that we maintain our vigil because fires and emergencies do not take holidays. I encourage you to keep up your training and proficiencies.

The last three months have been very busy for our agency in processing schools, Aid to Localities, Fire Service Boards Meetings and many other endeavors. I would like to highlight a few of the notables. The first is the Aid to Localities (ATL); the Agency distributed 60% of the funds (\$10 million) in the first distribution on September 22, 2006. The credit goes to the Virginia Fire Services Board and staff who have prompted the 324 jurisdictions to get their paperwork in expeditiously. If you have not submitted your paperwork, I encourage you to do so quickly. If you are not sure, please go to our website [www.vafire.com](http://www.vafire.com) and look under Grants.

We have 12 active New Burn Building Projects on-going including the recent dedications in Mecklenburg and Pulaski and two repair projects. The Virginia Fire Services Board and Christine Lopilato, Grants Manager, have worked diligently to keep the programs on course. Virginia should be very proud of its accomplishments in establishing state of the art training facilities.

The Mini-grants applications and Virginia Fire Information System Grants are progressing well and the Virginia Fire Services Board should release the awards at the next meeting in December in Henry County. What a great addition to be able to award additional funds to deserving agencies throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. I encourage you to participate in both of these programs in the future.

VDFP's Smoke Alarm Program has distributed 10,080 smoke detectors as a joint venture between the Agency and the Virginia Fire Services Board. I want to personally thank all of the recipients who will be installing and educating the public on the merits of early warning detection devices. It is imperative that we lower the death/injury rates and fire losses in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

I am pleased to announce the donation of two new LPG trailers from the Virginia Propane Association as a partnership program with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. The two units will enhance our training program and allow Virginia's firefighters to be better prepared for propane emergencies. There will be an additional article in the *Logbook* regarding this program. In addition, VDFP will be deploying seven (7) 500 gallon AFFF foam trailers in the near future as a logistical support for flammable liquid fires. One will be in each of the seven divisions. The locations and procedures will be published at a later date, but these are your units furnished by a Department of Homeland Security Grant (DHS). Please see the photograph in the *Logbook*.

On January 1, 2007, VDFP will launch its on-line Bookstore which will allow the fire and emergency services to order textbooks on-line with a credit card. We are also pleased to announce that our Bookstore will partner with the Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) to sell textbooks for our EMT Programs. Additional information will be released soon on this endeavor.

Our seven (7) division offices are eager to serve your training needs so please contact the Division Chiefs and Staff regarding your questions. We look forward to assisting you. Please be safe during the winter months ahead.

W.G. Shelton Jr., CEM  
Executive Director (Interim)

## 2006 Law Enforcement School for Fire Marshals



"Don't shoot the photographer," Lieutenant Rick Moorefield, Law Enforcement School Director, admonished the students. "If you shoot the photographer, it's a bad shoot!"

With that warning, eighteen students, well into the rigorous eight week training cycle at this year's *Law Enforcement School for Fire Marshals*, began conducting building searches and performing felony traffic stops. And while the caution to avoid shooting the photographer may have been a little light-hearted, this training is very serious. The purpose of the school, designed by the Virginia Fire Marshal Academy division of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs and the Department of Criminal Justice Services, is to prepare the students to receive police powers from their jurisdictions.

By the time the students graduate from the school on November 8th they will have received training in areas such as: Arrests, Search and Seizure, Evidence, Firearms, Defensive Tactics, Interview and Interrogation, Courtroom Preparation, Traffic Stops, Surveillance, and Environmental Crimes.

It all goes on, both in the classroom and in field exercises, under the watchful eye of seasoned instructors whose goal is to not only train the students to assume the role of Fire Marshals with law enforcement powers, but also to make sure they know how to be safe in performing the job.

It was evident on this day, five weeks into their training, that the students are learning their lessons well. And the photographer survived the building searches and traffic stops with not so much as a flesh wound.

## Burn Buildings dedicated



Mecklenburg County Burn Building dedication



Town of Pulaski Burn Building dedication

The Burn Building Grant Program, co-sponsored by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) and the Virginia Fire Service Board (VFSB), is designed to provide financial assistance for localities to construct new burn buildings, or renovate/repair existing burn buildings. New construction projects are funded up to \$430,000 (\$400,000 for construction costs and \$30,000 for Architect and Engineering services). All new construction projects and renovation projects over \$10,000 are reviewed and awarded by the VFSB. Repair projects up to \$10,000 are reviewed and awarded by the VDFP. VDFP currently has two (2) renovation projects and twelve (12) new construction projects. Of the 12 new construction projects, 3 burn buildings have been completed since July 1, 2006.

Two of the three completed projects were recently dedicated. Ceremonies were held October 12, 2006 to dedicate the Mecklenburg County burn building project. VDFP staff and VFSB members were on hand to congratulate Point of Contact Charlie Singleton and his fire service partners in the completion and dedication of their new building.

VDFP staff and VFSB Chairperson, Thomas Fuqua, were also present in Pulaski Virginia for the dedication ceremony of the Town of Pulaski's burn building project on October 31, 2006. Point of Contact Chief Bill Webb, Town Manager John Hawley, and Town Mayor Charles Wade and their fire service partners and supporters were in attendance to celebrate their project completion and dedication. Congratulations to Mecklenburg County and the Town of Pulaski!

## Propane association donates burn simulators to VDFP

On Wednesday evening, October 4, the Virginia Propane Gas Association (VAPGA) presented two burn simulators to the Virginia Department of Fire Programs for use in training first responders to properly handle emergencies involving propane. The event was held at the Concord Volunteer Fire Department, located on Route 460 East in Campbell County beginning at 6:00 pm.

Following the presentation, a live burn demonstration was conducted to show how the burn simulators work. Kinetic Resources of Lynchburg provided the propane needed to fuel the burn and Tiger Fuel of Lovingson provided the bobtail delivery truck to transport the fuel. Firefighters from the Concord Fire Department were on hand for fire suppression.

"There's no substitute for first-hand experience when it comes to handling a propane emergency," said Dennis Cruise, VAPGA's Outreach Coordinator.

Cruise said that in the coming year, his association will be providing quick reference guides to local fire departments statewide as an aid to help them understand the unique properties of propane and how to safely and effectively contain a leak or spill.

Tom Phalen, training coordinator/division chief for the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, said the burn simulators will be used around the state as part of future training exercises.



"Working proactively with VAPGA, we'll be better prepared if and when the need arises," he said. "Virginians should know how hard the propane industry is working to ensure safe use of their product."

VAPGA Education and Safety Committee Chair Tim Spicer said, "This is part of an ongoing effort since 2002 to increase awareness among emergency and first responder personnel in dealing with propane emergencies."

## Foam Trailers to be available soon



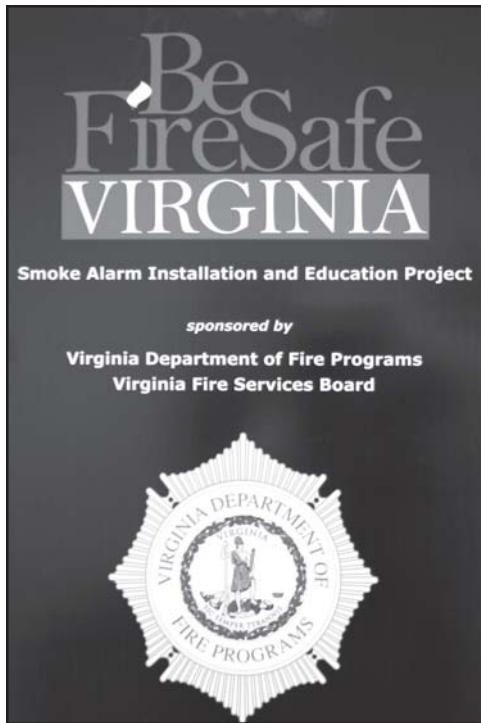
Seven foam trailers, purchased through a Department of Homeland Security grant will be in use throughout the state soon. They will be available as a state resource through the Virginia Emergency Operations Center.

The trailers are intended to support ongoing foaming operations, including but not limited to: Interstate Support, Aviation Support, Marine Incidents, Bulk Plant Storage Facilities, Hazardous Material Operations, and other emergency operations where a large quantity of foam is needed.

The trailers have a 500 gallon capacity and come equipped with a portable generator, two telescoping 500 watt lights and a transfer pump. Currently, they are being outfitted with foam and associated equipment. The trailers will then be deployed statewide with one assigned to each of the seven VDFP divisional offices.

## 10,080 smoke alarms distributed statewide

The Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) has completed distribution of over 10,000 smoke alarms to thirty-six jurisdictions throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia as part of the "Be Fire Safe, Virginia Smoke Alarm Installation and Education Project." The project was funded and sponsored by VDFP and the Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB).



Smoke alarms were provided to the jurisdictions for installation, free of charge, in residential households that do not already have adequate smoke alarm coverage as defined by National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. Additionally, information on home fire safety and smoke alarm maintenance was provided to the jurisdictions to use in educating the residents of homes where the alarms will be installed.

"We're thrilled to be able to provide these smoke alarms to communities throughout the Commonwealth," says W. G. "Billy" Shelton, Jr., VDFP Executive Director. "It's all about saving lives. Research shows that the chances of dying in a residential fire are cut in half when a working smoke alarm is properly installed and operating."

Distribution of the smoke alarms took place at regional events throughout Virginia during September and October. A full list of jurisdictions that received smoke alarms at the regional events is included below.

Albermarle County Fire Rescue  
 Alexandria Fire Department  
 Bedford County Dept. of Fire & Rescue  
 Brooke Fire Safety Association  
 Brookneal Volunteer Fire Department  
 Carroll County Emergency Medical Services  
 Castleton Community Volunteer Fire & Rescue  
 Charles City Vol.Fire&EMS Dept  
 Charlottesville Fire Department  
 City of Richmond Fire & Emergency Services  
 Colonial Heights Fire & EMS  
 Danville Fire Department  
 Dyke Volunteer Fire Co.Inc  
 Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department  
 Franklin County Public Safety  
 Fries Volunteer Fire Department  
 Goochland County Fire-Rescue Department  
 Harrisonburg Fire Department

Hopewell Bureau of Fire  
 Hurt Volunteer Fire Department  
 King William Emergency Services  
 Little Fork Volunteer Fire & Rescue  
 Manassas Volunteer Fire Company  
 Montgomery County Emergency Services  
 Newport News Fire Department  
 Petersburg Fire,Rescue & Emergency  
 Prince Edward County Fire  
 Prince George County Fire & EMS  
 Prince William County  
 Radford Fire & Rescue  
 Rappahannock-Rapidan Health District  
 Stanley Vol.Fire Department  
 Staunton Fire & Rescue Department  
 Victoria Fire & Rescue Inc.  
 Virginia Beach Fire Department  
 York County Department of Fire & Life Safety



## Regional Smoke Alarm Events



Glen Allen, October 20 - Charles City Volunteer Fire & EMS Dept., Colonial Heights Fire & EMS, Goochland County Fire-Rescue Dept., Hopewell Bureau of Fire, King William Emergency Services, Petersburg Fire Rescue & Emergency, Prince George County Fire & EMS, City of Richmond Fire & Emergency Services



Orange, October 11 - Little Fork Fire & Rescue, Brooke Fire Safety Association, Castleton Community Volunteer Fire & Rescue, Rappahannock-Rapidan Health District, Harrisonburg Fire Department, Stanley Volunteer Fire Department



Hampton, October 12 - Virginia Beach Fire Department, Newport News Fire Department, York County Department of Fire & Life Safety



Farmville, October 17 - Albemarle County Fire & Rescue, Charlottesville Fire Department, Victoria Fire & Rescue, Staunton Fire & Rescue Department, Dyke Volunteer Fire Co., Prince Edward County Fire, Brookneal Volunteer Fire Department



Marion, October 18 - Carroll County Emergency Medical Services, Fries Volunteer Fire Department, Radford Fire & Rescue



Springfield, September 19 - Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department, Alexandria Fire Department, Manassas Volunteer Fire Company

# VDFP FYI

## PUBLIC EDUCATION TIP

### Christmas Tree Safety Tips

- When decorating Christmas trees, always use safe tree lights. (Some lights are designed only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.) Larger tree lights should also have some type of reflector rather than a bare bulb and all lights should be listed by a testing laboratory.
  - Never use electric lights on a metal tree.
  - Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use tree lights. Any string of lights with worn, frayed or broken cords or loose bulb connections should not be used.
  - Check your strands of lights to determine the number of strands that may be connected. Connect no more than three strands of push-in bulbs and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs.
  - Always unplug Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.
  - Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and extend their life.
  - Never use lit candles to decorate a tree, and place them well away from tree branches.
  - Try to keep live trees as moist as possible by giving them plenty of water daily. Do not purchase a tree that is dry or dropping needles.
  - When purchasing a live or cut tree, check for fresh, green needles.
  - Choose a sturdy tree stand designed not to tip over.
- When purchasing an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled as fire-retardant.
- Children are fascinated with Christmas trees. Keep a watchful eye on them when around the tree and do not let them play with the wiring or lights.
  - Store matches and lighters up high, out of the reach of children, preferably in a locked cabinet.
  - Make sure the tree is at least three feet (one meter) away from any heat source, such as fireplaces and radiators. Try to position the tree near an outlet so that cords are not running long distances. Do not place the tree where it may block exits.
  - Safely dispose of the tree when it begins dropping needles. Dried-out trees are highly flammable and should not be left in a house or garage, or placed against the house.

## SAFETY/TRAINING TIP

Well, it's fall! Time for us to check the "Big Rigs" prior to the wintry weather and complete our fall preventive maintenance schedule. Let's be sure that we check all the fluid levels, including antifreeze, power steering, windshield washer fluid, engine oil, transmission fluid, and grease in the rear end. In addition, we need to be sure that all of the tires are properly inflated and inspected for wear and tear. Be sure to check the fan belts, lug nuts, and any leaks involving fluids. Remember that safety is everyone's responsibility.

Some items will require professional examination including the shocks, tie rod ends, front-end alignment, steering, and the engine tune-up. If you are dealing with the engine, you'll need to have the pump serviced. Aerials will require more extensive maintenance, including a thorough examination of the hydraulic system. If we complete all of these tips, we'll be ready for the next call. Stay safe!

### Christmas Tree Fire Facts

- Christmas trees were the items first ignited in an estimated average of 310 reported U.S. home structure fires per year in 1999-2002. These fires caused an average of 14 civilian deaths, 40 civilian injuries, and \$16.2 million in direct property damage per year. These statistics include both real and artificial trees.
- On average, one in every 22 reported home Christmas tree fires resulted in a death.
- More than four of every ten home Christmas tree fires are caused by an electrical problem or malfunction. One in four (24%) home Christmas tree fires resulted from a heat source placed too close to the tree. Seven percent were started by children playing with fire.
- When equipment was involved in the ignition of the fire, Lamps, Bulbs or Lighting (18%), and Cords or Plugs (13%) were cited more often than any other type of equipment. No equipment was involved in 44% of these fires.
- Candles were the heat source in 8% of the home Christmas tree fires per year between 1999 and 2002.
- Sixty-one percent of the home Christmas tree fires were reported in December, 22% were reported in January. Not surprisingly, the number of these fires spikes during the week of December 22-28.

## Structural Collapse Technician School held in VA Beach



The annual Structural Collapse Technician School was conducted October 14-21, 2006 at the Virginia Beach Fire & EMS Training Center. The strenuous, eight day course, now in its seventh year, was attended by 136 students from in and outside of Virginia. The school attracts students nationally from as far away as Washington State, California, Colorado, Kentucky and Georgia, and even internationally from as far away as Canada, Portugal and Australia. It is taught by FEMA Task Force 2 from Virginia Beach.

There are strict admission policies and prerequisites for the course. Students must have completed operations level rope rescue, trench rescue, confined space rescue and vehicle rescue. The students are mainly firefighters; however, there are a small number of other professions that attend. Most of the students are members of Urban Search & Rescue Teams that respond to collapse situations.



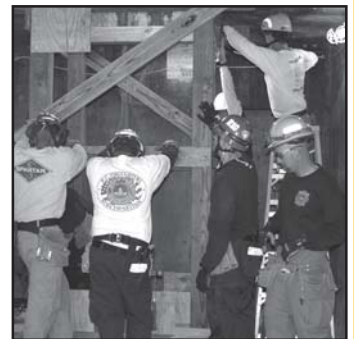
"It's all designed around structural collapse," explained Dennis Keane, Battalion Chief for the City of Virginia Beach and lead instructor. "There are three disciplines: shoring of structures; lifting and moving of heavy objects; and breaking and breaching of concrete. The first day consists primarily of safety lectures, engineering lectures, understanding how buildings work (how they distribute weight loads, etc.), and then shoring. The rest of the week, the next seven days, are all practical exercises primarily."

The final day of the course is devoted to one big exercise where the 136 students operate as a task force. They are divided into 3 divisions, 21 squads and go out and try to meet certain objectives that all the lead instructors in each discipline have developed. It's a tremendous amount of training, but when the students complete the course they are certified at NFPA 1670 standards. They also leave with a wealth of information to build upon and bring back to their departments and share with the members on their special teams.



"My experience has been that firefighters want to learn," commented Gregory Cade, Fire Chief for the City of Virginia Beach. "They want a chance to learn new skills and prove themselves in complex situations. When you get in something like structural collapse, or even just coming here to this school, you really get a chance to broaden your horizons. You get a chance to challenge yourself, really put your thinking cap on, and learn some new skills and then hopefully be able to take it back to your department and figure out how does this fit into the things that we do on a day-to-day basis."

"And these men and women who have been here," added Keane. "When they leave they've developed friendships that I don't think will ever leave them. On a big incident one day, you'll bump into somebody whose face you remember from this school. You may not remember their name exactly, but there's an instant connection that makes going to work a little bit easier."





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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**November**

2006 Equity-Diversity Conference  
November 3-5, 2006  
Virginia Crossings Resort, Glen Allen, VA

Office of Emergency Medical Services  
2006 EMS Symposium  
November 8-12, 2006  
Norfolk, VA

Veteran's Day Observed (offices closed)  
November 10, 2006

Thanksgiving Holiday (offices closed)  
November 23-24, 2006

**December**

Deadline for Governor's 2006 Virginia Fire Service  
Award Program Nomination Packets  
December 2, 2006

Virginia Fire Services Board Meeting  
December 13-15, 2006  
Henry County, VA

Christmas Holiday (offices closed)  
December 25-26, 2006

**January**

New Year's Day (offices closed)  
January 1-2, 2007